

Appl. No. 10/688,390
Amtd. dated April 6, 2006
Reply to Office Action of February 9, 2006

Docket No. 70288-020800

RESPONSE TO EXAMINER'S REJECTIONS/REMARKS

Responsive to the Office Action mailed February 9, 2006, Applicant thanks the Examiner for his guidance and patience. Further, Applicant thinks the Examiner for his comments in the interview of March 28, 2006. All of Examiner's comments and suggestions are very much appreciated. In the present response, the Applicant has amended Claims 1, 3, 10, 12, 17, and 18. No new subject matter has been added to these claims.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC §112

The Examiner has rejected Claims 10-11 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In particular, the Examiner points out that the terms "Said catch: and "said latch" lack antecedent basis. Accordingly, Applicant has amended these claims to comport with 35 U.S.C. 112.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC §102

The Examiner has rejected Claims 1-14, and 17-18 as being anticipated by Piretti (U.S. Patent No. 3,856,147). However, Piretti does not anticipate these claims as Piertti does not disclose all the elements of these claims.

I. Piretti does not disclose all the elements of the independent claims

a. Piretti fails to disclose a configuration that snaps together

In the present case, each of the independent Claims 1, 3, 10, 12, 17, and 18 discloses a latch and catch that are "substantially rigid and having adequate memory and elasticity to deform and snap back... wherein the catch is configured to snap into engagement with at least one latch." Moreover, Claims 1, 3, 10, 12, 17, and 18 are newly amended to emphasize that the latch and catch mate by snapping. For example, Claims 1, 3, 10, 12, 17, and 18 have been newly amended to include the phrase "...in an assembled state said catch snaps into engagement with a latch...in the transverse direction of the elongated deformable slot walls of said catch."

Appl. No. 10/688,390
Amndt. dated April 6, 2006
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Docket No. 70288-020800

However, Piretti does not disclose connections made by snapping. In fact, Piretti teaches that the connections can only be made via sliding. Specifically, Piretti at column 3, line 68-column 4, line 3 state (emphasis added):

“The panels 1 can only slide in the direction of the longitudinal edges of the interengaged panel, i.e., parallel to the coupling formations provided in the profiles 2 fixed thereto.”

Further support that the Piretti reference is limited to sliding is found in Column 1, lines 33-37 and Column 3, lines 43-44, 49-51, and 57-60. In summary, the Piretti reference does not disclose connections wherein the latch and catch are configured to snap into each other.

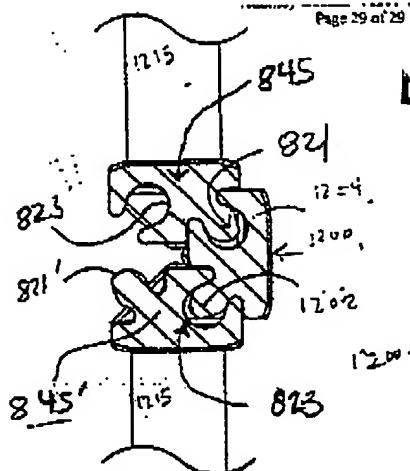
Therefore, for the reasons discussed herein, since Piretti does not disclose all the elements of the independent claims and their corresponding dependent claims, Piretti cannot be considered to anticipate alone or in combination with another reference these claims.

b. Piretti fails to disclose a straight connector that connects the two panels together to form a bridge.

Additionally, each of the independent Claims 1, 3, 10, 12, 17, and 18 discloses a “straight connector with at least one latch and at least one catch... through the which said straight connector is a bridge between the panels/ elements/ covers/connectors.” For exemplary purposes only, in one embodiment, a straight connector is depicted in Fig 16 C. For ease of reference, Fig 16 C has been included below. As can be seen, the straight connector 1200 has a latch 1202 and catch 1204 that allows the straight connector to act as a bridge between the two elements/panels/covers/connectors 1215 by connecting the respective latch/catch of the two elements/panels.

Appl. No. 10/688,390
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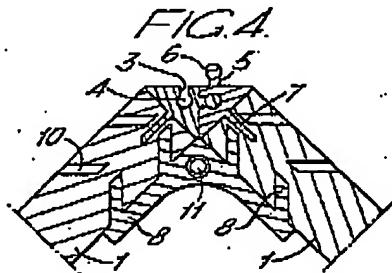
Docket No. 70288-020800



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FIG. 16C

However, Piretti does not disclose a straight connector as recited in the present application. Following the Examiner's assertions, Piretti's Fig 4. discloses two panels (1) having a latch (5) and catch (4) which are slidably connected to each other. For ease of reference Fig. 4 is included below. However, there is no straight connector having a latch and a catch. Further, Item 8 on Fig. 4 cannot be construed as a straight connector because it does not have a latch and a catch which connects to a respective latch/catch of each panel to form a bridge.



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Docket No. 70288-020800

Remarks

Applicant has complied with all requirements made in the above-referenced communication. In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the pending Claims in the application are in condition for allowance. Allowance of the pending claims at an early date is courteously solicited.

If, for any reason, the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call Applicant's undersigned representatives, attention Eglia Nair Flores at (310) 586-6511 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance.

This response is being timely filed and no fee is believed due. However, if Applicant is mistaken, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any required fee in connection with the submission of this paper, now or in the future, or credit any overpayment to Account No. 50-2638. Please ensure that the Attorney Docket Number 70288-020800 is referred to when charging any payments or credits for this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: April 6, 2006

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